ON05797

WORKING PAPERS OF THE OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

87-2

No.

THE RENFREW QUALITY EDUCATION PROJECT: TEACHERS' VIEWS AFTER THE FIRST YEAR

Title

Donna Sharon

Author/Principal Investigator

May 1987

Date

92-06380/

TVOntario

Office of Development Research
Bureau de recherche pour le développement

ODR Working Paper 87-2

THE RENFREW QUALITY EDUCATION PROJECT:

TEACHERS' VIEWS AFTER THE FIRST YEAR

Prepared by

Donna Sharon

May 1987

CONTENTS

THE PROJECT DESIGN 1

TEACHERS' VIEWS. 5

- Impact on Teaching. 5
- Impact on Students and Their Learning 7
- Working with Other Teachers 9
- Training. 11
- Support from Principals and the Board 15
- Ideas for the Next Phase of the Project 16

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS
OF THE TEACHERS' EXPERIENCE. 19

FOOTNOTES. 23

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Renfrew Quality Education Project was developed by John Stunt, Superintendent of the Renfrew Roman Catholic Separate School Board and Marcia Cunningham, Utilization Officer at TVOntario to train teachers in using television as an educational tool that can support the child-centered teaching strategies being encouraged by the board. The project adopted a collegial approach to teacher training. Initially eight teachers were involved and trained with the expectation that, once they felt confident using television effectively, they would work with other teachers in modelling for them and encouraging them in introducing similar techniques. In keeping with the process of effective school change outlined by Michael Fullan at OISE, a two to three year time frame was set for the project and active support from the school board and school principals was established.

To monitor the project's progress, interviews with the initial group of eight teachers were conducted at the end of the first year. This paper describes the teachers' reports of how the project affected their teaching and how their students' behaviour and learning were affected as a result. Summaries are presented of the teachers' initial activities in working with other teachers, of their observations on the training sessions provided by TVOntario, and of their suggestions for the next phase of the project.

The teachers' reports indicate considerable success in fostering positive attitudes towards school television and in encouraging the use of videotape programs that motivate students and involve them in curriculum-related learning activities. In the next year of the project, the teachers would like to continue demonstrating the techniques they have learned to other teachers and providing ongoing coaching and support to them as they learn. With the provision of additional release time for both the trained and novice television-using teachers, the board can expect to gain both a larger number of teachers skilled in using television well and additional first-hand experience with the peer coaching approach to teacher training.

THE RENFREW QUALITY EDUCATION PROJECT: TEACHERS' VIEWS AFTER THE FIRST YEAR

THE PROJECT DESIGN

As one component in a board-wide move toward child-centred teaching practices, the Renfrew Quality Education Project was introduced to train teachers in how to use television programming effectively in their classes. Prior to the project's conception, the Renfrew County Roman Catholic Separate School (RCSS) Board had introduced several measures to encourage the approaches and practices described in The Formative Years and Shared Discovery, two guidelines issued by the Ontario Ministry of Education. These documents emphasize the developmental needs and styles of individual children, with the goal of helping students become 'independent problem solvers'. Strategies to support this child-centred view include increasing opportunities for children to interact both with teachers and with other children and to undertake activities suited to their individual learning patterns.

The Quality Education Project was developed by John Stunt, Superintendent of the Renfrew RCSS Board and Marcia Cunningham, Utilization Officer at TVOntario to present television as an educational tool that can be used to support this child-centred approach. As the project began, some teachers were already using available school television programs. The project planners hoped to "change the attitudes and practices of teachers, while helping to produce self-direction and critical thinking in students."[1] After participating in the project, teachers were expected to have learned how to use television equipment, view programs critically, and plan lessons that relate television programs to curriculum objectives. In their teaching they would use television programs, along with related classroom activities, in ways that encourage students to participate and become critical viewers.

Another aspect of this project is the adoption of a collegial approach to teacher training. Initially, eight teachers were involved and trained with the expectation that, once they felt confident using television effectively, they would work with other teachers in modelling for them and encouraging them in adopting similar strategies. This peer-coaching

strategy represents a new approach to professional development for teachers.[2]

A project that encouraged the use of television to support student-centred teaching and involved teachers in a collegial approach to learning new skills was designed. The model for implementing change in schools, developed by Michael Fullan, a professor at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, was used as a guide.[3] In keeping with his view of change as gradual process, a two-to-three-year time frame was agreed on. Stunt and Cunningham, the project designers, received commitments of considerable resources and support from all levels of the Renfrew RCSS Board. This included three days of release time each year and travel expenses for the first eight teachers involved in the project. Support from TVOntario's Utilization department included Marcia Cunningham's time and expenses. The importance of ongoing personal and financial support was emphasized in planning the project.

Principles of adult education, which look at adults as self-directed learners, were also incorporated, both to promote the teachers' learning and as examples of the strategies they were being encouraged to use with their students. Many ideas and options were presented to the teachers but no precise expectations were defined. Rather, teachers were encouraged to design personal performance contracts to direct and monitor their own progress.

Marcia Cunningham prepared and led workshops for the varied group of five women and three men, including one kindergarten teacher, one Grade 3 and 4 teacher, one principal and teacher of Grades 5 to 8 in a small elementary school, two Grade 6 teachers, one Grade 7 teacher who also teaches Grade 8 History, one high school English teacher, and one high school librarian/English teacher. Two training days were held during the 1985-86 school year and two more in the Fall of the 1986-87 school year.

In the first training day held in February 1986, Marcia demonstrated techniques for using television and encouraged the teachers to try the techniques out with their students. Marcia showed how to use the pause and replay features of videotape equipment to spark discussion and encourage student involvement. She also showed examples of how to relate programs to curriculum and how to develop a variety of follow-up activities to suit different students' needs or give students choices.

At the same time, basic principles of adult education were introduced and teachers were encouraged to involve other teachers by giving workshops or presentations, by modelling lessons for other teachers, or by inviting other teachers to their classes. During the afternoon of the first training day, the eight teachers were asked to view a program, prepare a workshop demonstration for other teachers, and present short segments of such a workshop.

Between training days, teachers' connection with the project was encouraged by telephone calls from Marcia and by interest from the principals, school board staff, and trustees. The second day-long training session at the end of April 1986 began by discussing the teachers' experiences with performance contracts and ways to design them more modestly and realistically. Further work on planning and practicing television utilization workshop activities took up most of the day. The day concluded by organizing a buddy system for linking project teachers with other teachers in their school.

The third workshop held in September of the 1986-87 school year presented a profile of the skills of a successful television-using teacher developed by the project planners in conjunction with Ken Leithwood, a professor at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. As teachers practiced each skill, they acquired increasing proficiency and the level or stages they could be expected to pass through were identified. The skills outlined included setting objectives for television viewing, choosing television programs with content that relates well to the curriculum, arranging the environment to enhance students' viewing experience, preparing activities and instruction for the students to tie the television learning to other aspects of the subject being studied, and evaluating student progress.

The fourth training session in November focused on the development of utilization units to guide teachers in using particular television programs by suggesting ways to relate the program to curriculum and describing questions to ask and activities students could do before or after viewing the programs. Teachers were invited to consider how they might participate in creating such units and, if interested, to include such activities in their performance contracts.

While working as a researcher at TVOntario and studying part-time with Michael Fullan at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, I became interested in the process of implementing change in schools and learned of the Renfrew

Project as it was being developed. Following lengthy discussions with Marcia during the design stage, I proposed conducting interviews with the teachers to look at the project from their perspective. In Fullan's model for implementing change, monitoring the project's progress is recommended as a way of identifying problems and guiding development.

In February 1987, toward the end of the project's first year, I interviewed the eight teachers directly involved with the project about their experiences--about their use of television, their involvement with other teachers, their views of the training, and their suggestions for the remainder of the project. The next section of this paper summarizes the teachers' views and reports their experiences. The last section relates their views to the objectives set in the project's design and discusses the questions and issues ahead.

TEACHERS' VIEWS

Impact on Teaching

All of the teachers involved found the training in classroom use of television very valuable. Four of the teachers began the project with skeptical or critical views of television in school. One teacher said, "I wasn't really into TV...I felt that children see X number of hours of TV at home." Another teacher "was a firm believer that children watch too much television... When we finally did get a TV and VCR here, I didn't really realize what its function was all about." Several teachers pointed out that the TV is sometimes used as a filler, particularly just before holidays or weekends. However, after learning to preview critically, freeze frame or start and stop for discussion, replay sections, and plan related activities, these teachers changed their view of television in school. One teacher said that when showing a movie, "I stop it and question the children along the way, you know, and talk about it. And the children realize I do that or know I'm going to do it and they are learning something. They're ready...it's not a waste of time." After using the techniques in their classrooms, the teachers felt that they had control, that TV was an effective teaching tool that they could use to get students active and involved.

The five teachers who had used TV to some extent before the project appreciated the opportunity to hear new ideas about classroom techniques, preview programs, and discuss their use with the other teachers. "Now when I'm watching a program, I can pick and choose so many different elements...sometimes we're so keyed up and interested in the music or the pictures that we tend to let other areas go by...When I look at a program now, I try to pick out the best in the visual section, pick out the best in non-verbal language." A high school English teacher said, "I'm more conscious of how I should use this tool in the classroom. So I'm actually looking for those questions. For example, in the half-hour drama, Ugly Little Boy, the woman says that she doesn't get emotionally attached, but two minutes later you can see the compassion in her face for the child. You can pause on a closeup of her face and ask, 'Now what's the relationship between what her face is saying and what her words are?'" Two teachers mentioned the value of television in subject areas they were weak in such as music or science.

The teachers also saw many ways that using television could support a more child-centred approach, aiming to encourage independent thinking and problem-solving skills. Again, a kindergarten teacher was skeptical at the start: "Originally, I would have thought, well, what's the difference--being teacher-centred or TV-centred." But she went on to use a three-minute clip from the Today's Special program on dreams to spark her students'interest. "I let them just break up into groups and they went and talked with each other."

Teachers in older grades also saw TV as a starter that can be followed by a variety of activities allowing students to choose the ones that suit them best. "Everyone who follows the programs and uses the guides finds that there are plenty of follow-up activities, plenty of choice...I found that the programs do promote what we are doing within our Board, the curriculum renewal in our Formative Years...the critical thinking, the problem-solver, that is all brought out...It's promoting exactly what we're trying to implement...It's a great teaching strategy to promote that kind of learning. It's a tool." Another teacher had the students plan follow-up activities. "I find it starts them thinking, you know. They'll get ideas from the tape and then they'll think of what else they could do...they came up with ideas."

Compared to the enthusiastic assessments of using television in their teaching, the difficulties and adjustments teachers reported going through seemed modest. Only a few problems such as stolen equipment or awkwardness with window blinds were mentioned. Several teachers described the accommodations they had to make. One teacher with a split grade class in an L-shaped room had the two grades facing the blackboards at different walls because she was planning to use the television often. Students in one grade usually continued doing their own work when the other students were watching a program, but "if they're finished, it's nice to be able to turn around and see what the 5's or 6's are doing."

Teachers found that beginning to use television took extra time. "I have to spend some extra hours putting together sort of activity booklets for my kids and stuff like this...I think if you don't do some of this type of development, you sort of lose the flair. It's so easy for someone just to hand out your program to use it as a Bible. I think the real sense of teaching comes when you've worked with it, you've cut, you've torn, you've taken what you know works for you...and the next time I go to use it, it will already be there."

Impact on Students and Their Learning

As one teacher pointed out: "You have to look at the children's interest in it, how they respond to the TV itself...Otherwise, you know, I wouldn't use it if it wasn't working." Teachers' reports of student interest and involvement were very favourable. The attention-getting and motivating aspects of television were mentioned repeatedly:

> "I found it was just a terrific motivator. The kids just loved it."
>
> "It creates a lot of motivation, self-motivation for them."
>
> "Television is very motivating for most students."
>
> "They're certainly motivated by television. You think after awhile, after you show a couple of programs that they would get sick of that aspect but they don't...They don't mind using it at all."
>
> "On the whole, I would say the attention span lengthens with most kids...They watch with their full attention, it keeps their attention, and at the same time it feeds them information."

Teachers reported a variety of benefits for and from their students:

> "I could not believe how much they had retained, which I know they would not have retained if I had all my maps and my charts and we had gone at the Seaway the traditional way."
>
> "I found I got more quality stuff with the visual than they did with just the reading lessons...The quality, their answers, their sentence structure, not just the creativity, everything was better."
>
> "I see a lot of practical situations where the children will be able to use discovering on their own, inquiring...I find that their thinking has improved."
>
> "...many of the children won't get to Mexico but this is the next best thing. Perhaps even better because everything is chosen specifically...you're getting valuable information all the time."

Some teachers commented on the media sophistication of their students: "Children know how to get information from the television better than we do. They're brought up on it...I've had instances in which they will pick things out that I don't see."

Teachers also saw changes in their students' attitude to watching television, both in class and at home. "They were thinking of television as being entertainment and I really had to push them in the beginning. I really talked to them a lot, saying that it's different than sitting down and just watching...Once we got into it, I found by the second week they realized this was different." And another teacher says, "I think they realize that there is so much to learn from television in the classroom too. That it's not just a reward or it's not just show time."

Stopping the program several times for questions and discussion changed the students' expectations and encouraged them to be critical. One teacher said, "I think not only is it changing teachers' strategies, it's helping children look at television in a more critical way...I think they now are sort of judging the programs, that's being passed on by watching a program and going through it step by step. They take that to other programs that they watch and sort of analyze it that way." Another teacher commented, "From remarks that students in here have made, I think they're a little more critical of programs they're watching at home."

Teachers reported successful experiences using television as a teaching tool but they also pointed to some reservations. Some teachers felt that certain programs would be more useful and easier to use if they were more closely related to the curriculum. They also felt that television is a tool to be used in moderation--using only one series at a time or using three- or four-minute clips to get things started. The costs in terms of time are discussed later.

The teachers' comments indicated that the project enhanced their use of television and contributed to successful experiences for the students. For several teachers, skepticism about the value of television has been replaced by a confident view of television as an aid in teaching and motivating students. For teachers who had been including television in their teaching before the project, the gains seemed to be in improving the quality of their lessons by using the pause features and relating television programs more closely with curriculum and related activities. Most

teachers still preferred to use television sparingly--only one teacher greatly increased the amount of television she was using. For several teachers, their views of television meshed with a changing view of their students and, as the project designers hoped, connections were made between using television and increasing student participation in activities related to their individual preferences. Gains in increased students' critical thinking and self-direction were suggested as well in the teachers' comments.

Working with Other Teachers

From the beginning of the project, the eight teachers were called model television teachers (MTTs)--a name some don't like--to reflect the expecation that they would gradually become involved in training and encouraging other teachers in using television in their classrooms. This process is only in its beginning phase. No specific expectations were set out for the role that each of the model teachers would play. Rather, TVOntario staff gave presentations in workshop techniques and in principles of adult education, and outlined several options that the teachers could choose to pursue. In keeping with the adult education model, performance contracts were introduced to encourage teachers to consider and choose activities they would like to carry out between training sessions, and for monitoring and assessing their own progress. So far, six of the eight teachers have designed and tried out activities involving other teachers.

In the interviews, these teachers described the activities they've undertaken so far and what they thought the results were. Four of the elementary teachers became very active and involved in giving workshops, in working with individual teachers in their classrooms, and in one case, organizing weekly noon-hour tape viewing and discussions, and developing television support materials as well. These teachers seemed very comfortable and eager to work with other teachers in their schools. In one case, the model teacher took one or two programs and the teachers' guide from the primary social studies series We Live Next Door to a meeting to introduce the series and discuss it. He then followed up by going to the classrooms himself and teaching the first lesson. "In some classes I plan on going back and teaching another lesson...I think it's important, in my opinion, for someone to show teachers or to help teachers in the use of it...It has to be practical." Another teacher who had shown and discussed television programs with staff in her school was

pleased with a colleague's progress: "She is really enjoying it and she's using it as much as she can. And I was able to sit in one day to observe one of the programs...I was really amazed at how she presented the program to the kids. I think she did a super job for someone who didn't feel that comfortable with it when she first came in. She's back to the teaching field after being off for about 12 years."

Another elementary teacher was active in organizing several workshops and presentations with parents as well as teachers. Rather than working with teachers individually, he met with the teachers in his school in small groups, e.g., primary teachers, junior teachers. "I've had excellent results. I draw up performance contracts for myself each year and I've asked the other staff members to do so, and they have...again with excellent results." All four of these teachers felt that many of the teachers they worked with have begun, increased, and/or improved their use of television. For these teachers, the project has been successful in preparing them to begin working with other teachers.

The fifth elementary teacher had several frustrating experiences in getting the programs and the teachers' guides she needed to work with other teachers in the school. She then arranged instead to work with TVOntario in developing "utilization units," i.e., support materials which help teachers prepare to use programs, relate them to curriculum, and plan follow-up activities. This work also led to some work with teachers in their classes and in her own around the series involved. The sixth elementary level teacher in the project only joined the project during the 1986-87 school year. Having missed much of the training, she did not yet feel ready to work with other teachers but was expecting to start soon. "I have to do more teaching using more series for the rest of the year. But I see myself as being a coach to go in and help other teachers."

The two high school teachers in the project got together and organized an after-school workshop for English and Student Service teachers in their school. One of them commented that the process of preparing to give a presentation was beneficial: "Having to do presentations, that's a good point because then you take what you've learned and you add to it and you present it, and you certainly learn more when you have to teach it." While these two teachers felt that their efforts were well received, they did not see any future for themselves in giving workshops. Since high schools are organized by subject departments, people with expertise in

each area and familiarity with the related television programming would be necessary to work with teachers in other subject areas. "There's a little problem in how does the TVO project see this modelling concept (work) in a high school setting...I'm teaching English but now what do I do for science...it breaks down a little bit in high school versus elementary."

In talking about working with other teachers, one teacher said: "One of the resentments is that you still have your classroom to prepare, you have to get all that work in advance. Not as if they talk about release time. But it's a misnomer. You're never totally released because you have to prepare. It's a lot of work to do in advance to leave behind, and it has to be suitable work...My biggest problem in teaching is time. There are so many things in life I want to do and teaching is consuming so much as it is. I just could not imagine doing more."

Working with other teachers was identified as the area most in need of attention during the rest of the project. Individually, most of the teachers have identified the kinds of activities they would like to become involved in, but there was only a vague idea of how the project as a whole will develop in reaching other teachers and whether both the first group of teachers and the new teachers will be given time to do this type of work. This issue is discussed further in the last section.

Training

Four training days have been held so far--two during the 1985-86 school year and two held earlier this school year. Several of the teachers have found the sessions gratifying in a number of ways:

> "As MTT, I've had the honour of watching masters at work like Marcia Cunningham. And when you watch people like Marcia, you can't help but learn. Also, you learn from other television resource teachers...and you're becoming more familiar with different programs at different grade levels. You're becoming more familiar with the different teaching styles. You see how others use the television. And it's been very enlightening...At the first one, I remember in particular we split up into groups and myself and another teacher were watching a program from the You Can

Write Anything series, (called) "Writing a Report." And we were asked to come up with some follow-up activities after viewing the videotape. We could and were encouraged to use the pause button, and so we spent over an hour looking at the (15-minute) program and coming up with activities as follow-up activities to the program. And again, I found that really enlightening. When we matched what we came up with with the guidebook, many were the same so that gave us a good feeling because we were on course...we'd come up with some different activities, more activities...and perhaps the guidebook might be changed."

"I think the highlight was to see how to use this television effectively. And that was Marcia, you know, using the TV and showing us how...It's also good to hear of problems perhaps or ideas from the other teachers of what's going on and what's happening and hearing of programs they've used and really liked or don't like... Then you come back and you feel everything is going well."

"The thing that really gets us going and gets us eager with this whole thing is Marcia's enthusiasm...You come out of there and you feel you put a day in...But I think her enthusiasm for the program, her respect for us as professionals, and her wanting us to feel that we have a partnership in this is important...I think that ownership has been probably the mainstay. As far as working with us individually, she does very well. She gives us all time."

"Now the one thing I've really learned is how to use the VCR effectively. I learned how to use the remote control...how to pause, how to use my reset and my memory and use it properly...to pause and ask them questions, how to use it effectively."

"I've enjoyed the sessions...now after thinking of the child as the focus, the child learning on his own without needing to be structured every moment and so on. I can see the television, the video when properly previewed and presented can just open up all kinds of areas."

Some of the teachers, however, were left overwhelmed and intimidated after the first session, feeling that the expectations were too great or feeling let down when they returned to their classes.

> "I don't think I was the only one. I know I'm not because I talked to a few others that felt kind of overwhelmed at the beginning. And I'm just wondering if it couldn't have been that that anxiety couldn't somehow have been omitted by another approach...The first time we went we got into giving workshops. I didn't know how to turn the VCR on...Well, I just came out of there a wreck. Like this is the first lesson. Can you imagine what is going to be expected of me after a year? That kind of frightened me right from the beginning. I think we went into that too quickly. Now I don't know whether they realized that after because we took it a little slower from then on."

> "I must admit I was wondering what I am getting into here you know. I wasn't really sure of what was expected of me but now it's fitting all together."

Not all of the teachers attended all of the sessions, and invariably joining the project late or missing a session in the middle created problems for the teachers involved. One teacher who missed the first session mentioned several times during the interview that "I always had the feeling I was catching up." After missing one meeting, another teacher said, "When I came back I could just feel that everybody was kind of going into different little areas." A third teacher joined the project at the third session, replacing a teacher who had dropped out. While she had caught up in terms of using television with her students, she feels she missed out on the training: "I myself don't feel I'm adequately prepared to really go into a workshop format and do a presentation. I feel I'm at the stage now where I can start peer coaching."

As mentioned earlier, teachers used performance contracts as an aid in setting goals for themselves and monitoring their progress. During the interviews several of the teachers mentioned the performance contracts themselves and those who didn't were asked about their experience with them:

> "I go back and look at them many, many times...Have I covered this? How well have I done it? So the questions are very good."

"I saw a time limit there. Like you set your objectives, and there was a time limit. And I always try to get that done. And that was good because it did keep you on track. Now whether I was writing them down properly that's a question. But it suited me anyway that I got what I had planned."

"I like the performance contracts. It's a sense of accomplishment. What I don't accomplish, I don't get all worried about it because I know I'm human...For me, it's a check list and I find it a very good way to organize what you're going to do for that particular time in-between meetings."

The teachers were asked how this training compared with other training they've been involved with.

"I think it's different and there's more of a personal contact with other teachers. And it's going in that like with Marcia she keeps checking on us. I mean that you know that there's somebody there that's going to give encouragement and that it's ongoing...there's contact. It's not as if you know there's a workshop today and goodbye now, and you're gone sort of thing."

"I think possibly if I had been running the show I would have asked me to leave..she (Marcia) knew I was a doubting Thomas, but she could have asked Mr. Stunt to ask me to leave, but she didn't. So I kind of think that's been different. They stressed that we're not the same and we're all at different levels. And the big problem is that we're frustrated because we don't feel that we're up where we should be. But they seem to be very accepting about that. So does Mr. Stunt for that matter. He seems very accepting that any little stride you take counts."

"Well, I think that the difference you see here is that you're down to eight people so you're sort of looked upon as, ...it's quite important."

Overall, Marcia's presentations, the workshop simulations, the work with television programs, and the use of performance contracts to help teachers direct and supervise themselves were all well received. The first session seems to have moved too quickly and an adjustment period was needed for teachers to learn to use the performance contracts, to realize that they were expected to formulate expectations

themselves, and that external pressure was very limited. But once the project's pace was established, the teachers seemed to thrive.

Support from Principals and the Board

Based on his review of research, Michael Fullan concludes that active support from principals is crucial to a project's success. "Principals' actions serve to legitimate whether a change is to be taken seriously (and not all changes are) and to support teachers both psychologically and with resources."[4] At the same time the role of school board officials is essential. Having identified a few successful change efforts, Fullan reports that "the main difference appears to be that the successful ones had central office administrators who enjoyed or were able to gain the support of the board, and who had very clear views and sets of ideas and skills which determined how they confronted and managed change; in the management of change they provided the support and training to increase the willingness and capacity of principals and teachers to deal with change."[5]

The teachers' comments indicated active involvement and support from project designer and board Superintendent John Stunt, and from most school principals.

> "Our principal and some parents organized a mini-sports day for the children...So you see it gave us an hour-and a-half one day and we sat down and viewed a program, the teachers and I, so I was able to show them using the remote control and discuss the program."

> "He, (the principal) continually questions on the different programs...and he wanted to see some of the results of the students' work with regard to a program on Spirit Bay...And if I need a small thing like a cord or a problem television set, it's a case where he looks at it right away, and if it needs repair, it gets repaired. He's very supportive."

> "The discussion with the principals and seeing their enthusiasm and their willingness to push the project, I think that was very good because you have to have support form the top. We have John Stunt's support. There's no doubt about that. The principals are still the middle man. And they've got to be willing to give you that release time and not make you feel pressured.

> They have to be willing to relieve you of class time or set up a schedule in a way that someone else can go in and teach a lesson in your room...and we got all that from these people so I think that was good all around for everyone."
>
> "I've always found the Board very supportive when it comes to trying to better the quality of education we have for our students. They pick up on suggestions and give you credit for any suggestion that you may give. They're very compassionate and they're very understanding of the human aspect...it's not that you're looking for a pat on the back, but when it's there it sure makes it a lot easier."

All of the teachers felt commitment and encouragement from the Board, reflected in John Stunt's support, the availability of equipment and programs, and some release time. While most teachers were also getting support from their principals, one teacher felt that the school principal was not particularly interested in the project, although he didn't stand in the way. "He wouldn't come down here...he hasn't been in to see what I'm doing or hasn't asked...if I asked him for something, he'd give it to me." While the causes are not clear, this teacher did in fact report greater frustrations with the project than did the other teachers.

Ideas for the Next Phase of the Project

When asked about their suggestions for the next phase of the project, the teachers' greatest concern was the extension of good educational television into other classes and the role they themselves could play. However, teachers had differing views on what is needed.

Some teachers see their group of MTTs as important in involving other teachers. One teacher would like more training in "leadership skills and how to be able to present. We had a little chat about that, about (how) the hardest group to approach is teachers. Teaching teachers...Some of these others had done presentations to teachers. And they felt the teachers were relatively open. But they were more feeling that teachers need to be approached on a professional activity day in a workshop type form rather than a 3:30 to 5:30 slot because we're burned out..."

All of the teachers echoed the feeling that more release time is needed if they are to become involved in working with teachers.

> "I'd like to see more professional activity day time related to the education of teachers with regard to the use of television programs in the classroom...I would like to see more time given to TRTs and MTTs to make presentations to their staffs during PA days."

> "I think teachers do need time. Like I really don't think that you can expect them to go home at night and work 'till 11:30 at night. I don't know what the answer is. But I think that there should be some allotment for time."

One teacher viewed the situation from a different perspective, focusing on the need to produce more curriculum-related utilization materials to make it easier for teachers to use the programs. "I think a good portion of the people in the project feel that they could handle more workshops...I think now maybe what we have to do is give some curriculum development on a serious basis where we spend half a day or maybe one whole day in actually developing curriculum to go with different programs and sharing those ideas and working in groups. And maybe getting other people involved."

Others felt that workshops are of limited use and stressed the need for trained people in each school who will promote TV use in their school on a day-to-day basis.

> "I think that the eight of us have been working quite hard and have support from our own principals. But I feel now that there are a lot of schools out there that are really not aware of these tapes. And I'm hearing of more. And I'm wondering now if we shouldn't go back to like we started. Like when we started this (using TV), we had a rep (TRT or television resource teachers) from each school. And actually it was really for the mechanical aspect, they'd just come back and show the teachers how to use the audio or the video...And although I realize it was too expensive to pull 52 teachers in or whatever. Yet I really think that if you had an active teacher in every school where this thing is ongoing and continuous, you'd get better results...Now workshops I find are good. But you only pull X number of teachers. And so often we...shelve these things. I'm guilty, like I do that. And that's

where I feel that it would be much better if we could have someone working in every school."

"I think really if we concentrate on trying to get teachers in the other schools, an active person in one school, who's willing to contact their teachers when good tapes come in. I think that's one thing we should concentrate on. I think workshops are good...for the teachers who are there. But if there's not something ongoing, if there's not follow up...And the other thing we should concentrate on is time. I think we need support from the Board."

Another teacher also focused on the need for first hand experience rather than workshops. "I don't believe in pushing anything on anyone. If anything were to kill the project, it would be not being able to convince others of what a great teaching tool this is. And I think the way to convince others is not by preaching to them but by showing and doing. And if they see you doing it, then it'll catch on...But I think sometimes people feel swamped, and they sort of say, oh God, one more of those things and I'm quitting."

One teacher emphasized that she would rather do in-class demonstrations to bring the ideas to the teachers: "I would prefer to work with children if I'm going to present, I would prefer to use someone's class rather than give it to a group of teachers. Just so they then see it can be realistic."

And finally, a couple of teachers would like ongoing training in classroom use of television.

"They're coming out with new programs all the time with regard to different subject areas. And of course that's what I find really stimulating and very interesting...And if there are new ideas or new methods that come up...then pass it along to us as soon as possible."

"I still think that to be honest with you, we still need...to be kept up to date on the TV programs, how to present programs...follow up on our performance contracts, straighten out our objectives."

The implications of these diverse views of what is needed and how the project should move are discussed in the following section.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE TEACHERS' EXPERIENCE

The teachers' perspectives as presented in the previous section point to several areas for consideration in planning the next phase of the project. Implications of the teachers' comments for our understanding of the change process and for design of future projects are indicated as well.

1. The project is having considerable success in fostering the use of television as an educational tool and in relating the use of television to the Board's broader concern with child-centred teaching. Three key ideas that were touched on in the teachers' comments may merit further development, both for personal interest among the teachers and in preparation for doing further work with other teachers.

   - Several teachers indicated that they see connections between television use and child-centred learning. Spelling out the various aspects of this relationship and giving examples that show how television use combines with particular teaching styles and learning outcomes could be useful.

   - Developments in students' and teachers' critical viewing skills were also mentioned by some teachers as a spin-off of learning about and using educational television. A closer look at when and how this occurs could be useful in encouraging a critical perspective.

   - A couple of teachers mentioned the work required to connect programming and curriculum. Developing additional examples or new utilization materials could be of value in helping new teachers get started.

2. The project provided effective training in using television in the classroom, gave teachers the opportunity to share ideas about television use, and maintained ongoing contact with the teachers while they tried it out. However, their successful experience in the classroom was crucial--their reports supported previous research findings which show that teachers change as a result of successful experience.[6] Ongoing

investigation of this change process could be helpful as teachers prepare to do further work with other teachers.

3. The value of seeing change as a lengthy process requiring ongoing personal contact and support was strongly supported by the teachers' comments. Not only did they identify the long-term support as an essential feature of this project but some were extending this support in their suggestions for working with other teachers. While workshops were seen to have some value, an ongoing involvement on an individual or small group basis was seen as the key to spreading the use of television to more schools and classrooms.

4. The use of an adult education approach in conjunction with this ongoing support contributed to the teachers' positive experiences. The performance contracts were a successful means for helping teachers select the activities they would like to pursue and assess their progress. Although considerable frustration was involved as teachers overestimated the amount they could do at first, or felt that there were unspoken expectations on them, the ongoing support provided helped them ride through this phase and find gratification in working independently. This initial difficulty and gradual recovery is typical of the change process.[7] Ongoing use of performance contracts with this group and with other teachers as they become involved is warranted.

5. Consistent with adopting an adult education approach, the project has had very open-ended goals, allowing the teachers to make choices that shape the project's direction, rather than specifying expected results in detail. Given this freedom, each teacher has developed a unique combination of activities and objectives, including one or more of the following:

   - using classroom television well
   - giving good presentations for small groups
   - developing successful workshops
   - following up with teachers after group events
   - inviting teachers into their classroom
   - teaching lessons in another class
   - relating programs and curriculum and developing utilization materials.

While teachers will continue to choose their own activities, a shift in the focus of training and support seem desirable at this point in the project. To meet the widely-held goal of involving more teachers and schools, the highest priority should be given to peer coaching in individual or small group activities. Giving workshops and developing curriculum materials can be seen as supportive of these efforts, but less crucial. Keeping up with new programs, materials and techniques could be fitted in as time permits.

6. The project includes teachers at all grade levels and in several subject areas. Although two teachers found the varied group a positive experience, others would have preferred to be with teachers in the same grades or divisions. This was a particular problem for the high school teachers who found that the subject department structure of high schools limited their ability to work with other teachers. This situation merits consideration for the remainder of this project and in future projects it may be beneficial to select a more homogeneous group of teachers.

7. In all aspects of the project, but especially in working with other teachers, the project teachers felt pressed for time and in some cases drained by the extra workload. While working with other teachers and students can be useful for their professional growth, some teachers felt that their own day-to-day teaching suffered when they became involved in planning and giving workshops or working with other teachers on more than a very occasional basis.

   Seeing the need for ongoing work with many other teachers, they felt they could only do a limited amount without additional release time and support with their own students. Requests for working with teachers on professional development days rather than on school days and for additional release time to spend with teachers were frequent. This issue requires consideration before further plans are made.

8. Teachers felt at a substantial disadvantage when they missed even one training session, no matter how unavoidable the absence was. All efforts should be made in this and other projects to prevent such a situation by careful scheduling and, when needed, providing

individual sessions for those who have had to miss a meeting.

9. The teachers described support from their principals who in most schools asked about or sat in on classes where television was being used and helped teachers arrange release time. Similarly the teachers felt that the board was behind the project, providing video equipment and tapes, support services, release time and personal encouragement from John Stunt. Their comments support earlier research which emphasizes the necessity and value of such support.[8]

10. Perhaps because of the costs involved in training and supporting television use in schools, some teachers questioned the future direction of the project. Although one teacher described the television equipment and programs as a cheap source of worthwhile educational materials, the question was raised whether the training aspect was too costly to be a priority, compared to other needs in the board.

While this paper cannot compare the value of this project with alternative ways of using the resources involved, it does suggest that the project has been proceeding successfully. The teachers' reports indicated they had learned new strategies for using television in child-centred ways with their students and that with additional release time they would be interested in extending this expertise to more teachers. In the coming phase of the project, it can be expected that the board will gain both a larger number of teachers skilled in using television as a classroom tool and additional first-hand experience with the peer coaching approach to teacher training.

FOOTNOTES

1. Marcia Cunningham. Description of the Renfrew Project. TVOntario, Educational Services Branch, Utilization Department, 1986.

2. J. Little. Teachers as Colleagues. San Francisco: Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, 1985, and B. Joyce and B. Showers. "Improving Inservice Training: The Messages from Research." Educational Leadership, no. 37, 1980, pp. 379-385.

3. Michael Fullan. "Change Processes and Strategies at the Local Level." The Elementary School Journal, no. 85:3, 1985, pp. 391-421.

4. Michael Fullan. The Meaning of Change. Toronto: OISE Press, 1982, p. 71.

5. Ibid, p. 177.

6. Fullan (1982), p. 121; Fullan (1985), p. 393.

7. Fullan (1982), p. 267; Fullan (1985), p. 393.

8. Fullan (1982), p. 65, 71.